

DOWNTOWN ASHEVILLE DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

September 25, 2006; Revised November 28, 2006; Reformatted January 30, 2007

Project Name _____

Review Date _____

Landmark Review, Special Conditions, Monumental and Tall Structures

Overview of Guidelines

p.5	Monumental Buildings: Perhaps most significant about downtown is its concentration of historically significant structures and highly ornamented building fronts. Many of these structures have 'monumental' status, because of their tall stature, prominent siting (placement) or unique design.
p.5	A common characteristic of the taller buildings is that each is divided into three distinct sections: a base, shaft, and cap. Most of these buildings were designed with interesting and colorful roofs, in part in consideration of setting, in which views down into tops of buildings are often possible.
p.20	Most new buildings downtown will be of an 'infill' character, in which the design is a link between existing structures with related features. There are occasions, however where new, unique designs may be appropriate that deviate from the norm and add special accent to the urban fabric.
p.20	Asheville has a tradition of innovative, monumental structures that create a new aspect of the downtown environment. As a means of honoring this tradition, the Design Review Board will consider projects that depart from the guidelines where design excellence is demonstrated.
p.20	Although the majority of buildings are in the range of two to four stories in height, many others deviate from the norm. Variation in building heights adds interest to the Asheville Skyline.
p.20	Although the absolute heights of buildings are different, there are certain design features of the facades that are similar in height. Storefronts for example, are uniform in height at ground level regardless of overall building heights. This alignment of facades 'binds' buildings together visually while overall variety in height provides accent.
p.21	Tall buildings are encouraged where they may provide visual accent or frame views. Tall buildings make the core easily identifiable as the center of the city.
p.21	In order to provide interest to the skyline and frame views, variety in overall building heights is encouraged.
p.39	Principle: While basic compatibility with context remains important, the DTC may approve projects that do not meet the guidelines when a condition or conditions such as the following are met:

Checklist for landmark, monumental, special condition and taller buildings (all points may not apply to every project)

Review the proposal using this set of guidelines -		Yes	No
p.39	By virtue of its size, is the building prominent enough to merit "landmark" status? (i.e.: Battery Park Hotel)		
p.39.1	By virtue of its location, is the site prominent enough to merit a "landmark" building? (i.e.: terminating a vista like S&W cafeteria)		
p.39.2	By virtue of its use, is the building intended for public or institutional use such as library, church, or school?		
Ch.2	Is this project innovative; if so, how?		
Ch.2	Is design excellence demonstrated in the design in order to justify an innovative or monumental structure?		
p.20	Does the tall building make the Core easily identifiable as the center of the city?		

<i>Review the proposal using this set of guidelines -</i>		Yes	No
p.37.1,2,3	Decorative roof forms and materials are encouraged; consider forms that provide a 'cap' to the building, roof forms that frame views are encouraged; on flat roofs use a cornice or other decorative band as a 'cap' to the façade.		
p.21.3	Are window patterns, façade rhythm, and storefront character and storefront height similar to the general pattern in the core area regardless of the overall building height?		
p.39.3	Does the design exhibit special creativity and yet maintain compatibility with its context?		
p.39.4	Are the materials and construction exceptionally high quality?		
p.39.5	Does the project offer a positive public space in return for its setback allowance if needed?		
p.39.6	Does the design convey unique qualities of local heritage and craftsmanship especially for designs with creative or stylistic innovations?		
p.39, E., Int.	If the project qualifies as a landmark, it may be more innovative than allowed in the guidelines and there may be more tolerance for flexibility to the design guidelines, though quality and craftsmanship shall not be sacrificed.		

DOWNTOWN ASHEVILLE DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

September 25, 2006; Revised November 28, 2006; Revised December 7, 2006;
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Project Name _____

Review Date _____

Step 1: Site Plan and Context Review

UDO REQUIREMENTS for the Central Business District relating to site plan and context

Review the proposal using these requirements for CBD Zoning District	Yes	No	Comment
The use for the proposed development is permitted in the CBD.			
There no density caps, lot size, width, area requirements.			
The proposal is located on a Key Pedestrian Street; if so special requirements may apply to the site and development.			
Setback requirement is generally 0 feet from the front of lot.			
Special setback condition noted:			
Landscape plan meeting UDO Article 11 standards is provided.			
Parking requirements met: No parking permitted between building and any abutting street.			
Parking is not required off-street but parking provided on site.			
Parking garages on a key pedestrian street must screen parking with habitable use with a minimum depth of 20 feet or comply with design and operational standards for openings along the first floor			
Sidewalk required? If so width provided.			
Driveway curb cuts no wider than 24 feet wide and 200 feet apart on the same parcel or development.			
Dumpsters or free-standing equipment screened from view with solid partitions or other screening.			
Street furnishings in public ROW are approved by Department of Public Works			

Overview of Guidelines

p.3	The design concepts are guidelines in that they provide direction without dictating solutions.
p.3	High priority guidelines found at the beginning of each chapter will be important to most every appropriate downtown project.

Overall Design Review Goals

Review the project using these goals for Central Business District Design.		Yes	No
Int. P.6	Does the proposal promote harmony in visual relationships among buildings while allowing for variety?		
Int. P.6	Does the proposal develop an environment that is <u>visually interesting</u> and attractive for residents and visitors?		
Int. P.6	Does the proposal enhance the visual relationship of downtown to its setting, including close-in neighborhoods and distant natural amenities?		
Int. P.6	Does the proposal promote efforts to achieve high quality of design for new buildings at prominent locations?		
Int. P.6	Does the proposal promote building forms that will respect and improve the integrity of public spaces and scenic vistas?		
Int. P.6	Does the proposal maintain and encourage the recognition of downtown as the visual "center" of town?		
Int. P.6	Does the proposal develop an environment that facilitates healthy commerce and increases pedestrian activity and human scale at the street level?		
Int. P.6	Does the proposal preserve the overall historic character and significant historic/architectural resources of downtown for future generations?		

Checklist for Context: Site analysis

Review the project using answering these questions about site analysis.		Answer
Ch.2	What is the established character of the block.	
Ch.2	What are the established materials of the block.	
Ch.2	What is the established streetscape of the block.	
Ch.2	Are there national historic landmarks in the vicinity? What are they?	
Ch.2	What is the established height of the block?	
Ch.2	Is this project located in the core or gateway for downtown	
p.39.1	Is the site, scale or use prominent enough to merit a "landmark" building? If the project is deemed prominent by location, size, or public use, it will receive more thorough scrutiny in line with its impact on the existing environment. If yes then the landmark review check list will also apply.	
p.52	What are the "colors" of buildings on the block?	

Checklist for Placement and Circulation

Review the project using answering these questions about placement and circulation.		Yes	No
22.1, 59.1	Building is placed at the sidewalk edge.		
22.2, 60.1	If the building has a plaza at the sidewalk edge, does the plaza maintain the sidewalk edge with planters, railings or similar treatment?		
Ch.2, 30.1	Provide building access at grade.		
Ch.2, 62.1, 7-18-8(b)	Skywalks bridging streets are allowed only over alleys or private property		
23.2	Are storefronts aligned with others on the block?		
30.3	Proposal avoids using stairs to access shops.		
30.1	Proposal avoids creating internal lobbies to enter shops.		
60.2	Proposal avoids cutting off existing pedestrian paths.		
63 % 64	Proposal protects views of City Hall and the County Building and other designated landmark properties from adjacent corridors and streets by limiting architectural and landscape encroachments into the viewshed. If so note special properties		
70, 71	Parking lots are at the rear or side of the structure and buffered from public sidewalks		

Checklist for Landscape Architecture

Review the project answering these questions about landscape architecture.		Yes	No
61	Pedestrian routes are enhanced with landscape and streetscape amenities.		
66.1	Plazas and open spaces are oriented to views of landmarks or natural features to afford a special view.		
67.1	Open space is connected to special activity (pedestrian route, restaurant, entry to shops/office, etc)		
68	Open space creates a sense of enclosure.		
69	Year round seating is provided in the open space that is protected from winds in the winter and shaded in the summer.		
70, 71	Parking lots are at the rear or side of the structure and buffered from public sidewalks		
71.3	Parking may not be closer to the street than the adjacent structure.		
72, 73, 74	Curb cuts are minimized, Parking lots will meet requirements outlined in the UDO		
77	Decorative/accent paving is used to define seating, pedestrian circulation, bldg. entrances, and auto area edges.		

Review for landscape architecture (continued)		Yes	No
78	Historic paving materials on the site are preserved.		
83,84	Flowering/deciduous street trees are uniform in location & spacing		
83.3	Landscape species are varied to avoid loss to disease.		
86	Streetscape elements are protected with grates and guards		
82	Utilities are underground.		
87-89	Various planters are incorporated into the site and architecture.		
91-93	Compatibly designed seating with backs in pedestrian areas.		

Step 2 Architecture Review

UDO REQUIREMENTS for the Central Business District relating to architecture

Review the proposal using these requirements for CBD Zoning District.	Yes	No	Comment
Height met: Two story minimum			
No height maximum: provide note for actual height			
On corner lots buildings are placed at the corner			
Building provides the principle pedestrian entrance along a frontage line			
First floor street frontage provides at least 50% windows, doors and other openings			
On key pedestrian streets mixed-use projects at the street frontage façade provides detailing and glazing as storefronts for a minimum of 70% of the façade; upper stories provide 20% openings			
Along the first floor, solid wall expanses do not exceed 20 feet without an opening			
The proposal demonstrates a building design organization on each façade such as but not limited to a base-middle-cap organization, vertical articulation or other organizing principle			
Satellite dish antennas shall be roof mounted, of a size not to exceed 15 feet in diameter and neutral in color			
Mechanical equipment and appurtenances for the functioning of the building shall be enclosed, screened, or otherwise designed to be integral with the overall building design			
Buildings are required to be constructed along a min. of 80 % of the frontage line of the lot. This standard is not intended to limit access especially for smaller lots			

Overview of Guidelines

P.4	Façade widths vary throughout the Core Area. Many reflect the standard lot width, or multiple of it. But others have unique dimensions. The result is variety in the pattern of building fronts when aligned in a block.
P.4	Many upper story windows are placed at the same height above street level and their sills and lintels frequently align.; Storefront windows are also typically the same height and create a line.; On sloping streets, these horizontal features create a stair-step effect.
P.5	A variety of heights occurs throughout the core area. Each block contains a mix or two, three, or four story buildings. Taller buildings are found less frequently and provide contrast and accent to the skyline.
P.5	At the ground level, however, the scale of most buildings appears to be similar. This is in part due to the use of similar façade elements.
37	Decorative roof forms and materials are encouraged
22	Maintain the building line at the sidewalk edge.
22.2	If entrances must be set back from the sidewalk such as for a plaza, maintain the line with planters, railings or similar features

Checklist for Massing and Scale

Review the project answering these questions about massing and scale.		Yes	No
Int	Does the proposal promote harmony in visual relationships among buildings while allowing for variety?		
Ch.2	Maintain perceived similarity in building heights at the street level.		
Ch.2	Does the height add visual interest and is the height varied in context?		
Ch.2	Is there a "binding" element the base that ties into the context of the street?		
20.1	Does the height provide visual interest?		
21.2	Are there a variety of heights that produce an interesting skyline?		
20	Does the height frame views?		
20.1	Does the height contribute to making the "Core" more easily identifiable?		
Ch.2	Tall buildings should have "bases" and "caps"		

Check list for Architectural Review

Review the project answering these questions about architectural design.		Yes	No
Ch.2, 24.1, 24.2	Are there varied materials or architectural treatments to maintain the traditional rhythm of building widths creating a sense of façade modules that mimic "lot" separations over the overall composition?		
Ch.2	Maintain the traditional distinction between street level and upper stories.		
Ch.2	Are the storefronts uniform in height at the ground level?		
32	Proposal maintains distinction between upper and lower stories?		
19.1, 21, 23.1	Reinforce the established horizontal lines of facades and the general perceived similarity in building heights at ground level (found on neighboring buildings). Features may align with established building's moldings, cornices, and upper story window sills and store front character at ground level.		

Review for architecture design (continued)		Yes	No
Ch.2	Buildings with flat roofs should have cornices or decorative bands to “cap” their facades.		
Ch.2	Use traditional urban materials.		
Ch.2, 28.1, 28.2	Rustic materials such as rough-sawn wood, rough-sawn roof shingles, corrugated metal siding, and uncut stone are not allowed.		
Ch.2, 29	Sixty-five percent (65%) of a street level façade should be glass or other treatment of visual interest.		
Ch.2, 38	Screen roof-top equipment from view.		
25.1, 29.2	Proposal avoids large featureless surfaces, especially at the street level.		
25.2	Proposal uses familiar building components in traditional sizes?		
26.1	Proposal utilizes brick, terra cotta and cut stone on large surfaces?		
26.2, 27.2	Materials other than brick, terra cotta and cut stone have muted colors and matte finishes similar to brick and stone? Surfaces are articulated in modules/subdivisions that help convey a sense of scale.		
27.1, 32.1	Proposal avoids using highly reflective surfaces, especially at the street? First floor is primarily transparent.		
29.1	Proposal has storefronts, decorative surfaces, and other features to provide visual interest to pedestrians.		
31, 31.1	Storefront glazing is shaded by awning, canopy, arcades, or similar means to create pedestrian interest at the storefront and minimize glare.		
32.1	Building maintains difference between upper story windows and storefront windows. Upper stories are more solid with smaller openings.		
33, 37.1, 37.3	Building has parapet cap, cornice, or decorative “cap/hat” that creates a decorative roof form?		
33.1	Building has sign band above storefronts?		
33.1	Storefronts have transoms, recessed entry, and kickplate base?		
35.1, 75, 76	Service elements should be located at the rear of the building and screened by solid elements, landscape, or lattice screens.		

Checklist for Illumination

Review the project answering these questions about illumination.		Yes	No
40.2	Window lighting is dominant to entrance, sign, and building detail lighting.		
41.2	Warm colored lighting is preferred.		
41.3	Fixtures are concealed and appropriate to the building..		
42	Light levels at the pedestrian level are adequate for safety.		
43	Light fixtures have "cut-off" features to minimize glare.		
44	At parking lots and areas of pedestrian/automobile conflict, lighted bollards are used to highlight pedestrian path.		
79-81	Streetscape lighting is low-scale and appropriately designed		

Checklist for Signs

Review the project answering these questions about signage.		Yes	No
Ch4	Is the sign designed to appear to be an integral component without causing visual confusion?		
45.1, 45.4	If the sign is flush mounted, does it reinforce horizontal lines and not obscure architectural features?		
45.2	Does the sign color scheme coordinate with the color scheme of the building façade?		
45.3	The sign shall not extend beyond the outer edges of the building.		
45.5	Signs located at the tops of buildings are discouraged.		
45.5	Large panel signs are inappropriate at the tops of buildings.		
45.5	For corporate logos, use of logo, symbol or individually illuminated letters are encouraged.		
46	Projecting signs shall be located above the first floor.		
46.1	Projecting signs are near the entrance.		
46.1	Projecting signs do not project more than 36 inches from the façade.		
47	Window signs may not be located above the third floor of the building.		
48.1	Signs are made of painted wood, fabric or metal.		
48.2	Large plastic surfaces are inappropriate.		
48.3, 51.3	Plastic may be used in conjunction with back-lit cut-out letters. Internal illumination may only be used to light individual letters.		
49	Similar graphics and type setting is used on the sign to maintain visual harmony and identity.		
50	Warm colored lighting is used in conjunction with the display lighting.		
51	Indirect lighting is preferred, aimed on display and signage.		
51.2	Lights are shielded to minimize glare.		

Checklist for Color

Review the project answering these questions about color.		Yes	No
52	Do the colors complement the existing colors of the area? (earthtones)		
53.1, 53.2	One muted earthtone or pastel color should be the majority of the background surface?		
53.3	Trim colors do not contrast too strongly.		
54.1, 54.2	Bright colors are used in small amounts such as accent colors around doors, signs, or awnings.		